



TEACHING POETRY WRITING USING THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a study aimed at enhancing the poetry writing skills of Grade VIII C students at SMP Negeri 12 Malang through the implementation of the experiential learning approach. Employing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, the study was carried out over two iterative cycles, each encompassing the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Findings from the research demonstrated a 20% improvement in students' poetry writing abilities from the first to the second cycle. These results underscore the pedagogical effectiveness of the experiential learning approach in fostering students' creative expression and written literacy in poetry. The article further elaborates on the pedagogical implications of these findings, suggesting that experiential learning can serve as a transformative instructional model in language and literature education.

Keywords: *Experiential Learning, Poetry Writing, Classroom Action Research, Student Motivation, Literacy Skills.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Several studies have explored ways to improve students' academic writing skills (Heriyawati et al., 2014; Rofiqoh et al., 2022; Sulistyoto & Heriyawati, 2017), showing varied outcomes depending on the strategies, research designs, and student responses involved. These studies generally focus on academic writing, which follows strict formal and grammatical rules. In contrast, research on creative writing especially in literary forms like poetry remains relatively limited (Clark et al., 2018; Bailey & Bizzaro, 2019; El-Mahdy et al., 2019). One such study by Himawan (2025) emphasizes the importance of enhancing students' ability to write poetry as part of creative writing development. Poetry, as a form of literary expression, consists of lines and stanzas, often accompanied by rhyme and rhythm. Rhythm refers to the repetition of sounds in a regular and dynamic pattern, contributing to the poem's musicality and emotional impact (Pradopo, 2000:40). Writing poetry requires not only cognitive and linguistic abilities but also

imagination and aesthetic sensitivity. The use of imagery, figurative language, and metaphor becomes central, as poetry is often imaginative and beyond logical reasoning (Gumelar & Santosa, 2021; Fadilah et al., 2023; Jaya et al., 2025).

Teaching poetry writing is particularly relevant in the context of the Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum for Grade VIII students, where one of the learning objectives in the writing component is for students to express facts, experiences, and imagination in a beautiful and engaging manner through prose and poetry. Writing is one of the four essential language skills and is considered the most challenging, as it requires critical thinking, broad knowledge, and a structured process to produce a coherent text (Sulistyo et al., 2020; Rofiqoh et al., 2022; Khaki & Tabrizi, 2021). Poetry writing, as part of Bahasa Indonesia instruction, represents the artistic outcome of human thought expressed emotionally with rhythm, often using imagery and expressive language to create aesthetic and emotional resonance (Fitria, 2024; Pratama

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et al., 2020; Achmad, 2019). Dewi et al. (in Maulidah, 2020) emphasize that students need to engage in poetry writing to express literary sensitivity and to critically reflect on personal experiences.

Relevant studies have shown that experiential learning can significantly enhance students' poetry writing abilities. For example, Gunadi et al. (2023), through classroom action research, demonstrated that applying experiential learning improved students' ability to write free verse poetry. Similarly, Agustina et al. (2020) reported increased student performance from the first to the second cycle using experiential approaches, while Pangesti et al. (2021) found that students developed imagination more effectively by writing poems based on object studies and personal experiences. These findings suggest that experiential learning is a promising approach to stimulate student engagement and creativity in poetry writing.

Experiential learning is a student-centered approach that emphasizes learning through direct experience. Its goal is to facilitate cognitive restructuring, attitude shifts, and skill development (Priatmoko & Dzakiyyah, 2020). The experiential learning cycle includes four stages: (1) concrete experience, where students identify and reflect on personal life events; (2) reflective observation, where they process these experiences through discussion or writing; (3) abstract conceptualization, in which they develop ideas and compose a poem based on their insights; and (4) active experimentation, where students present their poems in various forms such as posters, videos, or live readings (Gunadi et al., 2023).

Field observations in Grade VIII C of SMP Negeri 12 Malang revealed several challenges in teaching poetry writing. Students often struggled to translate their ideas into poetic form, as their thoughts were still vague and lacked structure.

Furthermore, their motivation was low due to themes that felt unrelated to their everyday experiences. Based on these issues and the need to support students in poetry writing, this study focuses on the question: How can experiential learning improve students' poetry writing skills?

2. METHODS

This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, conducted over two cycles. The CAR method was chosen to investigate how the experiential learning approach can enhance the poetry writing skills of Grade VIII C students at SMP Negeri 12 Malang. The research subjects consist of 30 students from this class. Data collection techniques include observation, written tests, and documentation. The first cycle consists of two meetings, each allocated 40 minutes. Each research cycle follows four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

In the planning stage, the researcher held discussions with the mentor teacher to identify classroom issues and to understand student characteristics. During this stage, solutions were also designed to address the identified challenges. In the action stage, the researcher implemented the experiential learning-based classroom design. The observation stage was carried out concurrently with the classroom action, conducted by the researcher with the assistance of the mentor teacher and colleagues. Afterward, during the reflection stage, the researcher and mentor teacher reviewed and analyzed the actions taken, based on the data collected, to determine their effectiveness. The findings from the reflection stage informed the evaluation process, where necessary improvements were planned and implemented in the subsequent cycle to refine the learning strategy.

The analysis of students' learning outcomes was calculated based on the overall classical mastery with a minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of ≥ 75 , using the formula adapted from:

$$NP = \frac{R}{SM} \times 100\%$$

Where:

NP :Percentage of improvement in writing ability

R : Number of students achieving a score of ≥ 75

SM : Total number of students in the class

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the experiential learning approach in teaching poetry writing in the Bahasa Indonesia subject for Grade VIII C students at SMP Negeri 12 Malang was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two meetings. The stages of each meeting followed the phases of experiential learning and were continuously improved based on the reflections made after each session. These improvements were applied to enhance the effectiveness of each phase. Based on the analysis, the application of experiential learning significantly improved students' mastery in writing poetry..

Table 1. The Data of Subject.

Observed Aspect	Cycle I	Cycle II	Observed Aspect
Average poetry writing score	76.0	81.0	Average poetry writing score
Percentage of students achieving mastery	66.7%	86.7%	Percentage of students achieving mastery

In the first cycle, students achieved an average score of 76.0 with a classical mastery rate of 66.7%. In the second cycle, the average score increased to 81.0, and the mastery rate rose to 86.7%. These results indicate a 20% improvement in the poetry writing skills of students in Grade VIII C at SMP Negeri 12 Malang.

According to the findings presented in Table 1, the use of the experiential learning model effectively improved students' ability to write poetry. Students were actively involved in the process of poetry creation, which was based on reflection from personal experiences. This confirms that experiential learning is an effective approach to enhance students' poetry writing, as it also fosters creativity, communication skills, aesthetic appreciation, and critical thinking.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that the application of the experiential learning approach leads to a significant improvement in students' poetry writing skills. These findings align with previous studies, such as the one conducted by Hwang and Ham (2021), which showed an increase in students'

achievement in mathematics specifically geometry through experiential learning. Similarly, Nuriyanti et al. (2019) found that the experiential learning model enhanced students' narrative writing skills. Other related research by Gunadi et al. (2023) and Ariani (2018) revealed that even elementary school students benefited significantly from experiential learning in poetry writing. At the junior high school level, Pratama et al. (2024) found that this method stimulated students' imaginative capacity. Furthermore, studies at the university level confirmed that experiential learning activated students' imagination, aesthetics, and cognitive skills in poetry composition (Inderasari, 2018; Gashaj et al., 2023). These studies collectively suggest that the application of experiential learning can enhance academic performance in areas beyond language and literature.

Experiential learning enables students to learn through direct, meaningful experiences, which enhances their understanding and writing abilities. This method supports the development of

creativity, communication, aesthetic sense, and critical thinking. The results of this study reinforce the conclusions of previous researchers, such as Gumelar & Santosa (2021), who showed that students' imagination increased when they learned from firsthand experience. Other studies also affirmed that experiential learning boosts creativity by allowing students to learn directly from their lived experiences (Hajjah et al., 2022; Mubarokah & Rufaida, 2019). From the aesthetic dimension, research by Rahayu & Kurniawan (2021) and Ruswanda et al. (2020) also highlighted the benefits of this approach in enhancing the artistic quality of poetry writing. Overall, experiential learning strengthens students' reasoning and imagination by offering them the space to think critically, reflect on their lived experiences, and create aesthetically rich poetry.

In conclusion, the findings of this study show that students' learning experiences must be intentionally structured to help them meet specific learning goals. This supports the argument by Gunadi et al. (2023) that teachers should clearly define learning objectives and then align them with students' personal experiences. In addition, students must evaluate their experiences using both theoretical and emotional frameworks. Experiential learning provides students with a valuable framework for acquiring new knowledge and understanding through their own experiences. The implication is that every student has a unique way of developing imagination, critical thinking, emotional expression, and aesthetic sensibility in poetry writing. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to provide more opportunities, experiences, and trust to students in managing and cultivating their creative potential in poetry writing.

4. CONCLUSION

In the first cycle of the learning process, the average score obtained was 76.0 with a classical completeness percentage of 66.7%. In the second cycle, the average score increased to 81.0, with a classical completeness percentage of 86.7%. Based on this data, it can be seen that the poetry writing skills of Grade VIII C students at SMP Negeri 12 Malang improved by 20%. The experiential learning approach activates students' imagination, aesthetic sense, and cognitive abilities, enabling them to compose texts in the form of poetry. Therefore, it can be concluded that experiential learning effectively enhances the poetry writing skills of Grade VIII C students at SMP Negeri 12 Malang. Limitations of this study include the relatively small number of students involved and the short duration of the implementation. Future research is recommended to incorporate sub-variables such as students' learning styles to obtain more in-depth and beneficial results, particularly for writing instruction at the secondary school level.

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